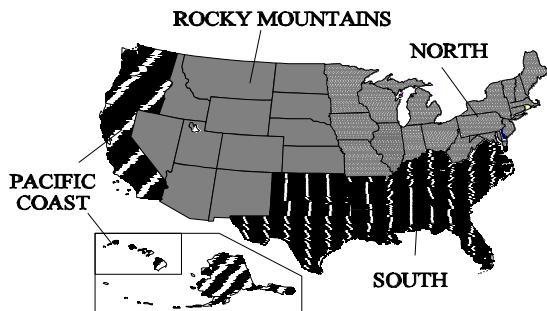


# Chapter 4: Regional Estimates Of Participation

The four Forest Service RPA Assessment regions of the United States—the North, the South, the Rocky Mountains, and the Pacific Coast (fig. 4.1)—differ somewhat in climate, topography, and culture. These differences lead to regional variations in recreation patterns. The regions also differ greatly in total population. The North has about 92 million people 16 and older, the South has 62 million, the Rocky Mountains has 15 million, and the Pacific Coast has 31million.



**Figure 4.1**—The four Forest Service RPA Assessment regions.

This report contains national (Chapter 2) and regional (Chapter 4) participation tables. In addition, participation tables of the Forest Service regions within a particular larger Assessment region can be obtained upon request. Demographics are presented at the national level (Chapter 3) and on the Forest Service RPA Assessment region level (Chapter 5). Public land management agencies will benefit from the more specific estimates presented in these regional tables.

This Chapter highlights the major differences in outdoor recreation participation among the four Forest Service RPA Assessment regions. Participation by activity is reported in percentages, days, and trips. Participation percentages and the total number of people participating, for 13 activity groups and 81 activities, is presented in Table 4.1. Table 4.2 presents regional variation in the mean number of days of participation per person per year. Table 4.3 presents the mean number of trips per person per year for each region. Number of days is reported for 10 activity groups and 48 activities and number of trips is reported for 11 activity groups and 45 activities.

## Participation Percentages

### Fitness Activities

In the South, about 66 percent of the people engage in at least one of the fitness activities—running/jogging, bicycling, long distance biking (i.e. bike touring), and walking. Percentages are lower for both bicycling, bike touring, and walking in the South, while running/jogging percentages are similar. One reason for these lower values may be greater numbers of retired people in the South. Another may be a small cultural difference in how physical fitness is viewed. Other regional differences in fitness activities include a lower percentage of running/jogging in the North and a higher percentage of bike touring in the Pacific Coast. Regional variations in participation in fitness activities are shown in Table 4.1.

### Individual Sports

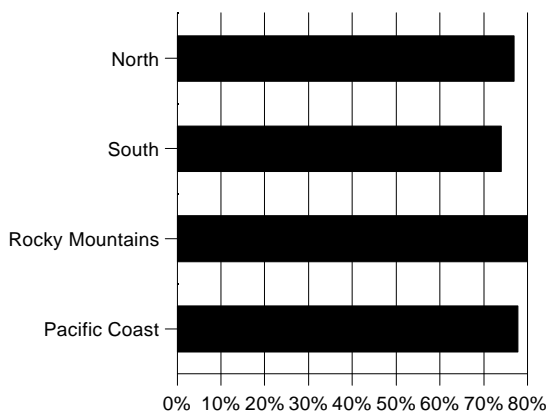
Overall participation in individual sports is lowest in the South (20 percent) and highest in the North (23 percent). The percentage of people who play golf is lowest in the South (13 percent) and highest in the Rocky Mountains (17 percent). Tennis, however, exhibits the same participation rate (11 percent) in three of the four regions, with the Rocky Mountains showing a participation percentage of 9 percent. Since golf and tennis can be enjoyed over a larger proportion of the year in the South, one might have expected this region to lead rather than to trail the others. Reasons for the regional differences are not known.

### Team Sports

The overall participation for outdoor team sports ranges from 25 percent in the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Coast to 27 percent in the North. Thus, the regional differences are quite small. These rates mask somewhat larger differences for particular sports, but regional participation rates are quite similar.

### Outdoor Spectator Activities

Overall participation rates for outdoor spectator activities are also similar with 57 percent in the South and 60 percent in the North and Rocky Mountains. Some 31 percent of Southerners attend outdoor concerts, while 37 percent of the people in the Pacific Coast go to concerts. Attending sporting events, however, is lower in the Pacific Coast (45 percent) than in the other regions (48-49 percent).



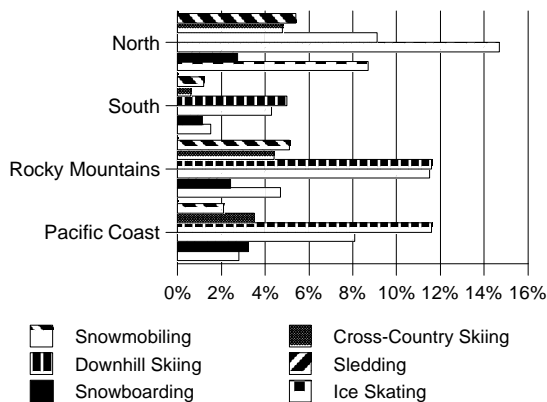
**Figure 4.2** – Percent of participation in viewing activities, by region.

### Viewing Activities

Regional participation in one or more viewing activities ranges from 74 percent to 80 percent (fig. 4.2). Variation is somewhat larger for individual activities. For example, 43 percent of Southerners visited a nature center in 1994-95 compared with 50 percent of the people in the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Coast. Visiting a prehistoric site and wildlife viewing were greatest in the Rocky Mountains (27 and 37 percent) and least in the South (16 and 29 percent). Not surprisingly, visiting a beach/waterside and studying nature near water were lower in the Rocky Mountains (56 and 25 percent) and greater in the Pacific Coast (66 and 32 percent). However, given the differences in climate, culture, and availability of viewing opportunities among regions, the regional percentages are remarkably similar.

### Snow and Ice Activities

For obvious reasons, Southerners are considerably less



**Figure 4.3** – Percent of participation in snow and ice activities, by region.

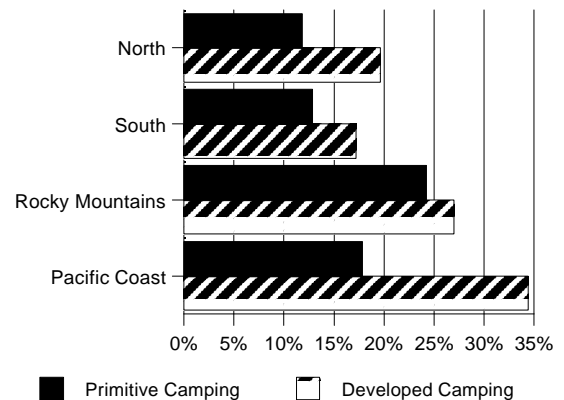
likely to engage in outdoor snow and ice activities than are their counterparts in other regions (fig. 4.3). Regional participation rates range from 9 percent in the South to 24 percent in the North. For Southerners, a downhill skiing weekend is likely to involve a long trip at a high cost. Despite the expense, some 3.1 million people from the South enjoy downhill skiing. But many more who might ski if they lived in another region probably substitute some other form of outdoor recreation.

### Camping

Perhaps because of the vast areas of public land available for it in the West, camping is more popular there than in other regions. Some 38 percent in the Rocky Mountains and 34 percent in the Pacific Coast camp, while only about 23 percent in the South and 24 percent of the people in the North camp (fig. 4.4). One person out of 4 enjoys primitive camping in the Rocky Mountains, while only about 1 in 10 does so in the South or North. In planning their recreation trips, people clearly are taking advantage of what is readily available to them.

### Hunting

Hunting is greatest in the Rocky Mountains and in the South. About 13 percent of the people in the Rocky Mountains and 11 percent in the South hunt. Only 5 percent of the people in the Pacific Coast engage in hunting activities (fig. 4.5). These regional differences have something to do with availability of hunting opportunities, but they may also represent cultural differences. Large tracts of public land in the western United States are open to hunting, while in the eastern United States a larger proportion of hunting is done on private land. The low percentages of people in the Pacific Coast and the North that hunt is probably related to a cultural difference as well as scarce opportunities. Increasing numbers of Americans do not hunt and would prefer if others did not hunt either.



**Figure 4.4** – Percent of participation in camping activities, by region.

## Fishing

Regional participation in fishing ranges from 24 percent in the Pacific Coast to 32 percent in the South (fig. 4.5). The individual kinds of fishing also vary considerably by region, depending largely on availability.

## Boating

The percentages of people who enjoy boating range from 26 percent in the Rocky Mountains to 30 percent in the North region (fig. 4.6). Motorboating is by far the most popular of this group of activities. About 25 percent of the people in the South and 20 percent of those in the Pacific Coast region enjoy this activity. Of the non-motorized boating activities, the popularity of canoeing and rowing ranges from 4 and 3 percent in the Pacific Coast to about 9 percent in the North.

## Swimming

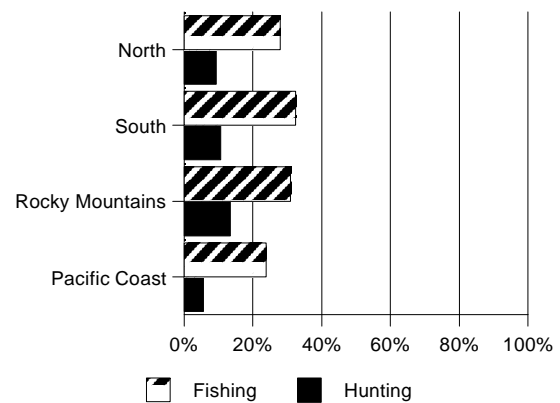
Swimming participation ranges from 50 percent in the Rocky Mountains to 56 percent in the North. Not surprisingly, snorkeling/scuba diving and surfing are most popular in the Pacific Coast (10 and 3 percent). One might expect non-pool swimming to be most popular in the South, where water temperatures are high. However, the popularity of non-pool swimming is highest (42 percent) in the North.

## Outdoor Adventure

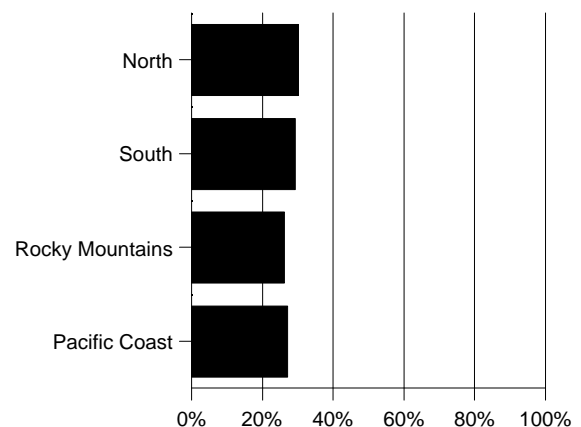
About one third of the people in the North and South enjoy at least one of the activities classed as “outdoor adventure” compared to about half of the people in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountains (fig. 4.7). This is a major regional difference that deserves additional study in the near future. Hiking, hiking to a summit, backpacking, backpacking to a summit, mountain climbing, and rock climbing are about twice as popular in the two western regions as in the rest of the country. Caving, off-road driving and horseback riding, are also more popular in the western United States than in other regions. Differences in regional topography and in the presence of public land likely explain much of the difference.

## Social Activities

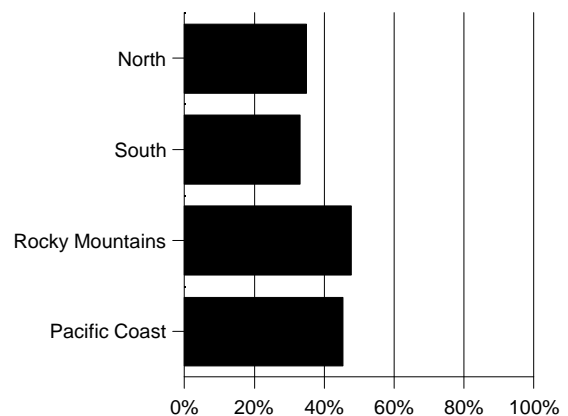
Participation in one or more of the traditional outdoor social activities—yard games, picnicking, and family gathering—ranges from 65 percent in the South to 71 percent in the Rocky Mountains. Participation in yard games is highest in the North (41 percent) and lowest in the Pacific Coast (31 percent). The Rocky Mountain region leads participation in picnicking (55 percent) and family gatherings (63 percent), with the South being the lowest (44 percent and 59 percent).



**Figure 4.5**—Percent of participation in hunting and fishing, by region.



**Figure 4.6**—Percent of participation in boating activities, by region.



**Figure 4.7**—Percent of participation in outdoor adventure activities, by region.

## Number of Days of Participation Per Year

### Fitness Activities

Of the fitness activities, people over the age of 16 spent more time walking. Nationwide, people walked approximately twice a week. People of the Pacific Coast walked 111 days of the year, while the North averaged 105 days per year. The number of days spent biking was similar. However, the North region led the nation in the number of days spent bike touring.

### Viewing Activities

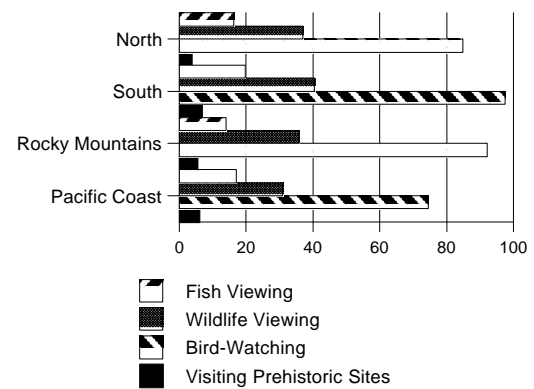
Visiting a prehistoric site occurred more often in the South (7 days) and least in the North (4 days). Southerners also went bird-watching (98 days), wildlife viewing (40 days), and fish viewing (20 days) more often than the rest of the nation, with the Pacific Coast region spending the fewest days bird-watching and wildlife viewing (fig. 4.8). Not surprisingly, visiting a beach/waterside and studying nature near water occurred less frequently in the Rocky Mountains (16 and 19 days) and more often in the Pacific Coast (34 days) and the South (26 days). Overall, Southerners participated in some form of viewing activity more often than any other region in 6 of these 8 viewing activities, yet the South had the least amount of participation in half of these activities. So although the South had fewer participants, they participated in viewing activities most often. The explanation may be due to the climate and lack of availability of viewing opportunities. In the South, there are more nice days, year-round, to enjoy these forms of outdoor recreation.

### Snow and Ice Activities

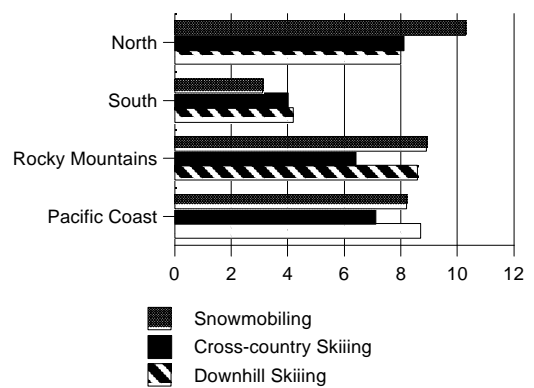
For obvious reasons, Southerners participate less often in outdoor snow and ice activities than their counterparts in other regions (fig. 4.9). Some form of snow or ice activity is enjoyed approximately 8 days a year in the North, Rocky Mountains, and Pacific Coast regions, while Southerners spend only 4 days a year skiing or snowmobiling.

### Camping

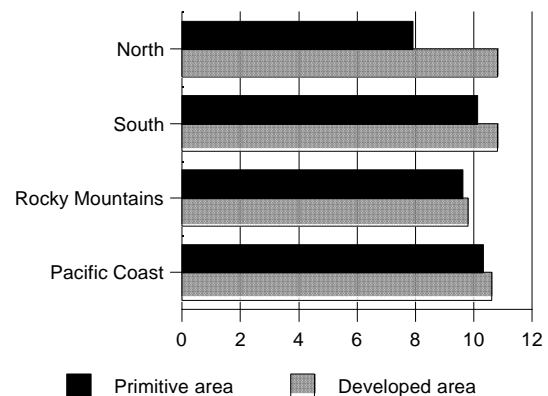
The number of days a year on which people over the age of 16 camped was surprisingly similar among regions and types of camping. Regional variation in developed area camping was 10-11 days per year, and primitive area camping was 8-10 days per year (fig. 4.10). Because both primitive and developed camping are more popular in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountains, this consistency in the annual number of days spent camping indicates that although fewer Southerners and Northerners camp, they do so more often.



**Figure 4.8**—Number of days spent in viewing activities, by region.



**Figure 4.9**—Number of days of participation in snow and ice activities, by region.



**Figure 4.10**—Number of days of participation in camping each year, by region.

### Hunting

Regional differences in the amount of days spent hunting follow the same trends as camping. Although big game hunting is most popular in the Rocky Mountains, people

in that region spend only about 10 days a year hunting compared to approximately 15 days a year in the rest of the country. Conversely, people in the Pacific Coast hunt migratory birds over 10 days a year although the percentage of people participating in that form of hunting (6 percent) is below the national percentage (9 percent).

### **Fishing**

The annual number of days spent fishing largely reflects regional differences in availability of the different types of water and fish species. For instance, people of the Pacific Coast spend the lowest number of days freshwater fishing and the highest number of days pursuing anadromous fish. The time spent saltwater fishing is also lowest in the Rocky Mountain region, which is completely landlocked. Warmwater and coldwater fishing also reflect regional availability. Southerners fish for warmwater species more than 20 days a year (compared to approximately 15 days for the other regions) while people of the North and Rocky Mountain regions fish for coldwater species, such as trout, more often than the South and Pacific Coast regions.

### **Boating**

The number of days people enjoy boating varies among activities and regions. Generally, people across regions pursue non-motorized boating less often than motorized boating. Regional variations are slight between the various forms of muscle or wind powered boating activities and range from 4 to 11 days per year. Within motorized water sports, motorboating is by far the most popular of this group of activities. People in all regions spend 10 or more days per year motorboating, with Southerners enjoying up to 19 days of this activity per year. Regional differences in the number of days boating may be a reflection of the resource base and the varying amounts of passion for that particular activity.

### **Swimming**

People across the country spend more days surfing than any of the other swimming activities. Not surprisingly, people in the Pacific Coast region spend the most time surfing (39 days/year) while people in the Rocky Mountains surf only 4 days of the year. Snorkeling/scuba diving, the least popular of the swimming activities, is most often done in the South region (9 days/year).

### **Outdoor Adventure**

Off-road driving and horseback riding are the most popular of the outdoor adventure activities. People spend between 19 and 28 days off-road driving and between 19 and 32 days horseback riding. Off-road driving is most often done in the North and horseback riding is most often done in the Pacific Coast. Hiking is nearly equally

popular across regions (16-18 days per year) despite the fact that a greater percentage of people in the western regions participate in hiking. Similarly, although backpacking is about twice as popular in the West as in the rest of the country, people of the Pacific Coast region spend the most number of days a year pursuing this activity (10 days). Mountain climbing, rock climbing, orienteering and caving are also performed more often in the Western regions than in other regions.

### **Social Activities**

The number of days picnicking or participating in a family gathering is similar among regions and activities. Between 8 and 10 days a year are spent participating in one of these traditional outdoor social activities. However, although the number of days spent participating in these activities seem low compared to other outdoor activities, the majority of the population participates in these activities, resulting in millions of participants per year.

### **Number of Trips Per Year**

#### **Fitness Activities**

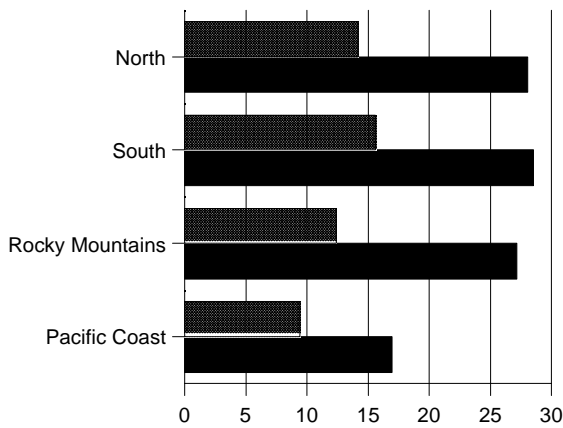
Biking was the only fitness activity in which the number of trips per year was determined. Nationwide, people over the age of 16 went on biking trips an average of twice a month or 24 times a year. Regional variation was slight, with people of the Pacific Coast biking approximately 26 times a year.

#### **Outdoor Spectator Activities**

The number of trips taken to attend outdoor concerts was nearly the same among regions, ranging from 3 trips in the South to 4 trips a year in the remaining regions.

#### **Viewing Activities**

The number of trips spent visiting a nature center showed minimal regional variation (4 trips per year). However, the number of trips spent visiting a prehistoric site was greatest in the South (4 trips per year) and least in the North (3 trips per year). Southerners also took trips to visit historic sites, bird-watching, wildlife viewing, and studying nature near water more often than the rest of the nation. People in the Pacific Coast region took the fewest number of bird-watching and wildlife viewing trips (fig. 4.11). Not surprising, people of the Pacific Coast region took the most trips visiting a beach/waterside (19 trips per year) while people of the Rocky Mountains visited them least often (10 trips per year). The pattern in the number of trips taken to participate in a viewing activity was very similar to the number of days spent participating in a viewing activity. Overall, Southerners spent more days



**Figure 4.11**—Number of trips per year spent in viewing activities, by region.

and took more trips to participate in 6 of the 8 viewing activities than any other region, yet the South had the least amount of participation in half of these activities. Although the South had fewer participants, they participated in viewing activities more often. The explanation may be due to the climate or the greater number of retired persons in the South.

### Snow and Ice Activities

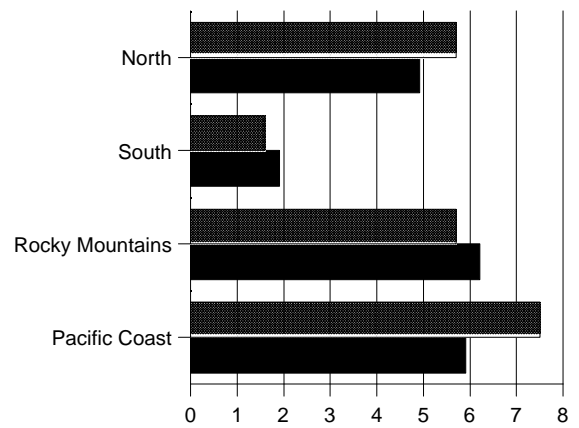
Southerners took the least number of trips (2 per year) to participate in all outdoor snow and ice activities than their counterparts in other regions. Although people in the North region spent more days in snow and ice activities, they took the least number of trips (excluding the South), indicating that Northerners take longer trips skiing or snowmobiling (fig. 4.12).

### Camping

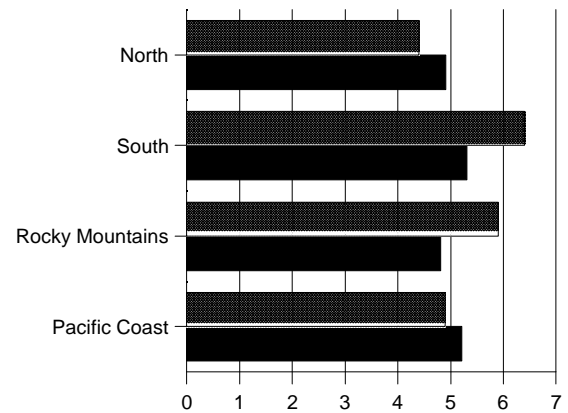
The number of trips a year in which people over the age of 16 went developed camping was similar among regions, all averaging about 5 trips a year. Primitive area camping showed a little more variation, with people in the South and Rocky Mountain regions taking 6 trips a year, and those in the North taking only 4 trips a year (fig. 4.13).

### Hunting

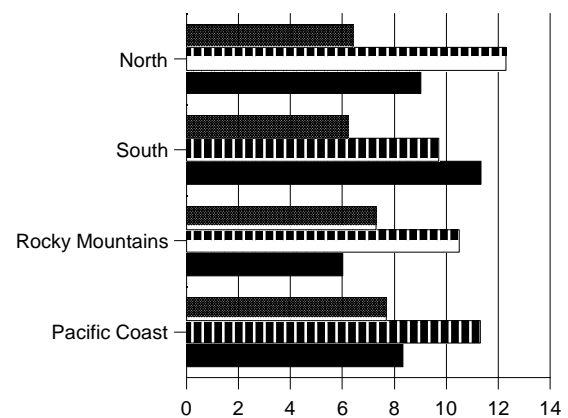
The number of trips people take for big game hunting is greatest in the South (11 per year) and least in the Rocky Mountains (6 per year). Regional differences also exist in the number of trips spent migratory bird hunting; people in the Pacific Coast take 8 trips a year, while hunters in the North and South travel only 6 times a year. Minimal regional variation exists in the number of trips spent hunting small game (fig. 4.14).



**Figure 4.12**—Number of trips spent skiing or snowmobiling, per region.



**Figure 4.13**—Number of trips spent camping, by region.



**Figure 4.14**—Number of trips spent in hunting activities per year, by region.

### Fishing

The regional number of fishing trips taken per year closely mirrors the number of days spent fishing, most likely reflecting differences in availability. People in the South take more fishing trips for freshwater, saltwater,

and warmwater species than the other regions. In addition to availability, proximity to fishing areas may explain some regional patterns. For instance, although the Pacific Coast region spends the least number of days freshwater fishing and the most number of days pursuing anadromous fish, they take the most coldwater fishing trips (12 trips per year), and the least number of trips pursuing anadromous fishing (7 trips per year) or saltwater fishing (3 trips per year). This may reflect the large populations along the coast which are close to the ocean, yet need to drive to the mountains or another region to fish for coldwater species.

## **Boating**

Generally, people across all regions take more trips to go motorboating and water skiing than any other boating activities, with Southerners enjoying motorboating at least once a month and water skiing 10 times a year.

Regional differences in the number of days spent boating is most likely a combination of the extent and proximity to the resource base, and the varying amount of passion for these activities. For instance, people in the Pacific Coast spend the most days and take the most kayaking trips (13 trips per year) of any region, although the regional participation rate of kayaking is well below the national average. Passion for sailboarding also exists in the North. Although the North has the same percentage of participants as the other regions, they lead the country in the number of days spent and trips taken (6 trips per year) in pursuit of sailboarding. Proximity to the resource base may also explain some regional differences in the annual number of trips taken. Although the Pacific Coast region spends the most number of days sailing, their 3 sailing trips per year is well below the national average of 7 trips a year. The opposite holds true for canoeing in the Rocky Mountain region. People in this region take 6 canoeing trips a year compared to only 3 trips a year for the other regions.

## **Swimming**

Swimming is a very popular activity across the country with people taking 16 and 11 trips a year to participate in pool and non-pool swimming, respectively. Regional differences are minimal. This is not surprising due to the widespread availability and low cost of this activity. However, surfing and snorkeling/scuba diving show large regional variations due to obvious concentrations of the resource base and the relatively high cost of participating for some people.

Surfing and snorkeling are most popular in the South and Pacific Coast regions. However, people in the Pacific Coast region take only 2 trips a year to surf (again, explained by the proximity of the population and the

resource base). Snorkeling/scuba diving, the least popular of the swimming activities, is most often done in the South region (8 trips per year), with the Rocky Mountain region surprisingly taking the second most number of scuba diving trips (6 trips per year).

## **Outdoor Adventure**

Off-road driving, horseback riding and hiking are the most popular of the outdoor adventure activities. People in the Rocky Mountain region lead the rest of the country in the number of trips taken to participate in horseback riding and hiking (16 and 13 trips, respectively), while the South takes the most off-road driving trips (22 trips per year) and the least hiking trips (10 per year) and horseback riding trips (12 per year). The number of hiking, backpacking, mountain climbing, and caving trips are relatively similar among regions despite the greater percentage of people in the western regions participating in these activities. These western regions, however, are more likely to take trips to go rock climbing than the eastern regions.

## **Social Activities**

The number of trips picnicking or participating in a family gathering is very similar among regions and activities. Between 6 and 8 trips a year are spent participating in these traditional outdoor social activities. The number of days spent participating in these activities are also similar. This indicates that while most participants usually travel some distance to participate in these activities, they do not usually stay overnight.